



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
Public Administration for the 21st Century

School of International and Public Affairs, College of Arts and Sciences

**First International Academic Seminar for Local Authorities, Punta del Este, Uruguay
November 30 - December 2, 2012.**



Daniel Rodríguez Páez, President of the Departmental Board of Maldonado

From November 30 until December 2, 2012, the Departmental Board of Maldonado organized the First International Academic Seminar for Local Authorities in the Hotel Conrad in Punta del Este, Uruguay under the auspices of the National Congress of Councilors, Florida International University, and the Global Crisis Foundation.

The Board invited speakers from FIU's Institute for Public Management and Community Service (IPMCS) to the seminar, whose main focus was to discuss the topics decentralization, urban development, water resources and tourism, relevant for the citizens of Punta del Este and Uruguay.

The seminar was attended by approximately 150 persons, the majority of them being members local and regional governments in Uruguay. Because it was only within the past few months that Uruguay has established elected local governments, many of the participants were relatively young and while having strong community roots, new to elective politics. FIU's speakers included Dr. Allan Rosenbaum, Director of the IPMCS, Cristina Rodríguez, Deputy Director of the IPMCS, Jeisson Rodríguez, Ph.D. Candidate at FIU, and Gretha Burchard, Ph.D. Student at FIU. Additional speakers were Bertha Goldenberg, Assistant Director for Regulatory Compliance and Planning in the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, Sebastián Navarro, Chairman of the Mayor 's Forum of Climate Change and founder of the Global Crisis Foundation, Martín Albert Jasper, Director of JasperArchitects, and Nik Wenzke, employee at JasperArchitects.

In Uruguay, the movement towards a decentralized government began in 2009 with the enactment of the "law of political decentralization and citizen participation". The seminar's aim was to help the Board and the citizens of Uruguay with their effort to implement the law.



Dr. Allan Rosenbaum, Director of IPMCS, and Cristina Rodríguez, Deputy Director of IPMCS

On the first panel, Dr. Allan Rosenbaum talked about decentralization, local development, and public participation. In order to improve public service, it is important to disperse power and divide it between local authorities. Different communities have different necessities, and local governments have the knowledge and capacity to improve the public service. Local officials have to support public participation; they have to be creative and spontaneous in order to find new solutions for new problems.

Subsequently, Sebastián Navarro highlighted the importance of sustainable tourism, the awareness of climate change, and the use of renewable energies.

On Saturday morning, Cristina Rodríguez listed a variety of important features regarding needed human resources in order to make decentralization work. Such features include transparency, audits, the creation of new responsibilities, the implementation of evaluation systems, mechanisms for the communication between officials and the public, flexibility, technical capacity, training, and collaborations with the private sector and NGO's.

Another important topic was brought up by Bertha Goldenberg. She presented the positive results of the work of the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, which was able to constantly reduce the use of water by giving incentives for efficient water use. The department collaborates with energy programs and started to enact legislative initiatives in order to save water.

The last panel included the topics urban development, sustainability, and mobility. Martín Jasper and Nik Wenzke talked about their experience with sustainable constructions and introduced the concept "Smart Cities", which denominates buildings that generate energy and exchange this energy with other buildings with the help of an innovative energy exchange networks.

Finally, Jeisson Rodríguez explained the case of the foundation of public recycling in Bogotá, Colombia. After having had enormous problems of introducing a recycling system in the city, it was finally successfully installed with the help of incentives and with the collaboration of local businesses.

On Sunday morning, the closing ceremony took place in the Departmental Board of Maldonado. Various members of the Board and of the IPMCS expressed their gratitude, and Gretha Burchard reviewed the highlights of the conference.

The First International Academic Seminar for Local Authorities in Punta del Este was an enormous success. The presentations of the international experts who shared their experiences and viewpoints revealed the importance of providing power and training to local public officials and legislators.



Official Agenda

**First International Academic Seminar for Local Authorities, Punta del Este, Uruguay,
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“Building the path” (“Un camino en construcción”)

Friday, November 30

6:30 pm: Opening

7:30 pm: First panel: “Decentralization, local development and citizen participation. Sustainable tourism and climatic change”.

Panelists: Dr. Allan Rosenbaum, Sebastian Navarro

Moderators: Elisabeth Arrieta, María de los Ángeles Fernández Chávez

Saturday, December 1

9:00 am: Second panel: “Decentralization: Efficient local administration of human resources and training”

Panelists: Dr. Allan Rosenbaum, Cristina Rodríguez-Acosta

Moderators: Liliana Capece and Marie Claire Millán

11:15 am: Third panel: “Efficient use of hydric resources and drinking water”

Panelist: Bertha Goldenberg

Moderators: Cristina Rodríguez, Carlos Stajano and Juan Shaban

3:00 pm: Fourth panel: “Contribution to municipal services in a decentralized ambiance. Urban planning, sustainable constructions and urban mobility”

Panelists: Martin Jasper, Nik Wenzke and Jeisson Rodríguez

Moderators: Roberto Airaldi and Pablo Gallo

Sunday, December 2

10:00 am: Conclusions – Gretha Burchard

11:00 am: Closing ceremony